

State of Connecticut

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Hartford

September 7, 2010

Mr. Jim Buckmaster, CEO
Craig Newmark, Founder
Craigslist, Inc.
1381 9th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122

C/O

Edward Wes, Esquire
Perkins Coie
101 Jefferson Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025-1114

RE: Adult Services Section of craigslist

Dear Messrs. Wes, Buckmaster and Newmark:

I write to seek information necessary to advise the coalition of Attorneys General that I have helped to lead seeking an end to prostitution ads on craigslist.

In apparent response to pressure and appeals from Attorneys General, advocacy groups, victims, and public outrage, craigslist has shut down the adult services section of its website. This step is exactly what we requested and I commend craigslist for heeding our call, but significant questions remain. I strongly urge you to make a public promise that the shutdown will be permanent and complete, and that effective screening and flagging measures will be implemented to prevent the prostitution ads from migrating to other sections.

When craigslist took down the link to the adult services section, it inexplicably chose to replace the link for adult services with the word "censored," leading to public speculation that the action is only temporary. During the past three days, such speculation has increased, in the absence of any statement by craigslist. I urge you to state clearly and unconditionally that adult services has been shut down and that "censored" in no way implies that it may be reinstated.

Second, and equally important, there is the distinct danger and apparent trend that prostitution ads may migrate to other heavily trafficked portions of your site. Already, there are

indications that the personals section may become rife with sexually graphic content and illegal activity, including prostitution.

Technology is available that should allow craigslist to easily screen ads that blatantly promote prostitution. A simple word search in the casual encounters portion of the personals section of your website identifies ads that solicit sex for money. Craigslist must do more to stop ads that enable illicit activity that may lead to assaults on women, human trafficking and other serious crimes. Simply removing one portion of your site where you permitted and profited from prostitution ads is insufficient if ads go elsewhere. Not only does technology enable craigslist to easily screen for ads that promote prostitution but a simple manual review of ads in the personals section of craigslist can readily detect illegal activity and other postings that violate its terms of service.

I urge craigslist to employ other means of verification and detection before prostitution ads become rampant in the personals section.

It should state unequivocally that it will permanently and completely remove the adult services section. Craigslist should employ the resources necessary -- show it has the will as well as wherewithal -- to remove ads promoting prostitution in other sections.

Craigslist should prove by its words and actions that it is committed to protecting women and children from exploitation and harm. Craigslist has the power to stop these ads -- and a historic opportunity to set a model for others.

I look forward to working with you on this issue critical to public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Blumenthal", written in a cursive style.

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

RB/pas